

Preventing Tobacco Use and Addiction Among Young People

How You Can Help

Everyone can play a part in helping young people avoid using tobacco products. If you are a parent or guardian, student, teacher, athletic coach, school administrator or board member, health professional, or anyone else who cares about the health of young people, here are some steps you can take to make a difference in their lives.

Everyone Can

- ✓ Teach young people that using cigarettes, cigars, and smokeless tobacco (snuff or chew) puts them at risk for health problems and addiction.
- ✓ Voice your support for tobacco-free schools and effective tobacco-use prevention education to school administrators and board members.
- ✓ Encourage merchants to limit the number of tobacco ads in their stores, remove self-service displays, and comply with the law by checking IDs and refusing to sell tobacco products to minors.
- ✓ Ask merchants and managers of hotels and restaurants to locate vending machines where they will not be accessible to young people.
- ✓ Speak at a meeting or submit a letter to a local newspaper to discuss the importance of clean indoor air restrictions and policies that limit young people's access to tobacco products.
- ✓ Encourage coordination between school and community programs to prevent tobacco use and addiction.

Parents or Guardians Can

- ✓ Set a good example by not using tobacco and give clear, consistent messages about the dangers of tobacco to your children.
- ✓ Provide your children with a tobacco-free environment at home.
- ✓ Support comprehensive school health programs and insist that they include tobacco-use prevention education.
- ✓ Help your children who use tobacco set realistic goals for quitting and give them positive reinforcement and encouragement.
- ✓ Help your children who use tobacco identify the underlying reasons for its use and substitute positive activities, such as physical activity or stress management, to compensate.
- ✓ Help your children critically analyze messages that glamorize tobacco use on television, in movies, and in magazines and other print media.
- ✓ Join a school health committee and guide policies to prevent tobacco use.
- ✓ Volunteer to help school staff implement tobacco-use prevention activities.
- ✓ Work with the school board to provide assistance programs, rather than punishment, for students who violate tobacco-use policies.
- ✓ Share tobacco-use prevention information with your children and talk with them about related homework assignments and projects.

Students Can

- ✓ Teach peers and younger students about the importance of not using tobacco.
- ✓ Ask for and support tobacco-free schools and communities.
- ✓ Encourage the school to ban ads for tobacco products from student publications and events.
- ✓ Take elective courses in health.
- ✓ Volunteer to help in community efforts to prevent tobacco use.
- ✓ Suggest that the school paper print a story about tobacco advertising and promotion campaigns aimed at young people.

Teachers Can

- ✓ Set a good example by not using tobacco.
- ✓ Use curricula and teaching methods that meet the criteria in CDC's *Guidelines for School Health Programs to Prevent Tobacco Use and Addiction*.
- ✓ Work with other school staff to coordinate tobacco-use prevention efforts and give students consistent, reinforced messages.
- ✓ Teach tobacco use-prevention issues in a variety of classes, such as science, history, and English.
- ✓ Encourage and support the efforts of students and school staff to quit using tobacco.
- ✓ Prohibit tobacco use by students participating in sports and stress the adverse effects of tobacco on sports performance.
- ✓ Involve families and community organizations in tobacco-use prevention activities.
- ✓ Find and use national, state, and local resources for tobacco-use prevention education.
- ✓ Participate in tobacco-use prevention training and share experiences with other teachers.
- ✓ Evaluate tobacco-use prevention activities and student progress.

School Administrators and Board Members Can

- ✓ Organize a school health committee that includes all key groups and has a mandate to develop tobacco-use prevention policies and programs based on the CDC guidelines.
- ✓ Enact and enforce policies that require school facilities, grounds, and events to be tobacco free.
- ✓ Communicate tobacco-use prevention policies to staff, students, parents, and the community.
- ✓ Require tobacco-use prevention education for students in grades K–12.
- ✓ Encourage the establishment of tobacco cessation programs for students and staff.
- ✓ Involve teachers and other staff, families, and community members in key decisions about tobacco-use prevention programs.
- ✓ Hire teachers with preservice training in preventing tobacco use and provide ongoing in-service training that focuses on teaching strategies for promoting healthy behaviors.
- ✓ Encourage activities to evaluate the effectiveness of programs to prevent tobacco use.

For more information about what you can do to prevent tobacco use among young people, please see CDC's *Guidelines for School Health Programs to Prevent Tobacco Use and Addiction*. This document is available from CDC, Division of Adolescent and School Health, ATTN: Resource Room, 4770 Buford Highway, NE, Mailstop K-32, Atlanta, GA 30341-3717; e-mail: ccdinfo@cdc.gov; phone: (770) 488-3168; fax: (888) 282-7681; Web site: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash>.